

STANDING COMMITTEES:
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
HOUSING & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT, VICE CHAIR
JOBS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
AND THE ECONOMY

Assembly California Legislature



BONNIE GARCIA
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March 22, 2006

Secretary of State Bruce McPherson
State of California
Sacramento, California

RE: CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL PERMIT POLICY

Dear Secretary McPherson:

I was disturbed to read an article in *The Sacramento Bee* on Sunday, March 20, 2006, regarding a directive issued by the California Highway Patrol in 2003 that sought to shut down signature gathering in front of state buildings across the state. This policy stood for more than two years before being reversed in March 2005.

Whether the original action taken was politically motivated or an example of sheer stupidity, **the result is the same—more than 100 permit applicants were denied the right to exercise their First Amendment right.**

It fact, it can be argued that because of the heavy foot traffic at state buildings, millions of interested citizens across the state may have been prevented from registering to vote, signing petitions and obtaining information from groups or individuals that sought to serve them.

I am therefore requesting that your office research state and federal law and issue a clear directive to prevent similar incidents in the future. We must also act to avoid state employees from making arbitrary decisions that expose the State of California to legal and financial liability.

As a candidate in the 2004 General Election, I raised concerns with former Secretary of State Shelly and the Federal Elections Commission about thousands of suspect voter registration cards submitted by unscrupulous signature gathers in Riverside and Imperial Counties. A subsequent investigation found many new voters had become victims of identity theft when, without their knowledge or consent, multiple registration cards were submitted in their names. In fact, the Imperial County District Attorney arrested a suspect who registered more than 100 people directly from the telephone book.

Serving Imperial and portions of Riverside County

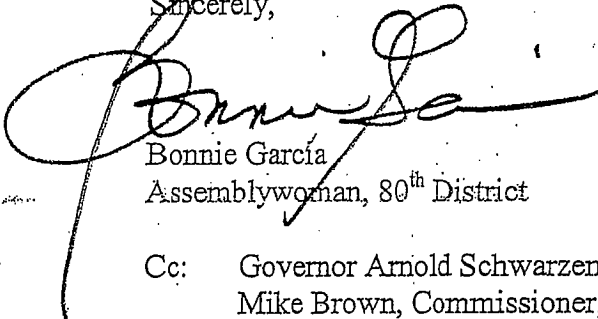
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I have to question whether the denial of permits to persons and organizations we could identify resulted in pushing these unregulated groups motivated by dollars to fabricate their work.

A fair and honest election should be within reach for all Californians, therefore I urge you to act quickly, before the June 2006 Primary Election.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bonnie Garcia". The signature is written over the printed name and title.

Bonnie Garcia
Assemblywoman, 80th District

Cc: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
Mike Brown, Commissioner, California Highway Patrol